UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/1998/NGO/103
31 March 1998

ENGLISH
Original: ENGLISH, FRENCH and
SPANISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Fifty-fourth session
Agenda item 10(a)

QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN CYPRUS

Written statement submitted by the Society for Threatened Peoples, a non-governmental organization with special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

[31 March 1998]

GE.98-11498 (E)

1. The Society for Threatened Peoples fears the development of a new trouble spot and possibly military conflict in the eastern Mediterranean. While the Government of the Republic of Cyprus prepares the building of air defence systems with Russian support, in order to defend itself against possible attacks, the Government of Turkey threatens the Cypriots with military retaliatory measures.

2. In July 1974 Turkish troops landed in northern Cyprus, after the Greek military regime in Athens had installed a fascist government against the will of the population. Despite the fact that a few days after the Turkish army's landing, democratic conditions were re-established they continued their offensive and occupied 36 per cent of the island. Over 3,000 people were killed by Turkish soldiers; 180,000 Greek Cypriots and those who lived with them, the small minorities of Armenians, Maronites and Latins, were expelled to the south. Since the Turkish offensive, 1,619 Greek Cypriots have been missing.

3. For five centuries the Turkish Cypriot population settled in all regions of the island, until they were voluntarily or forcibly concentrated in the north. Since 1974, Turkish Cypriots have left the northern part of the island under pressure from approximately 30,000 Turkish soldiers and a wave of new settlers from Anatolia. There are estimates from the Turkish Cypriot opposition that already about half of the Turkish Cypriots have emigrated to Australia, the United Kingdom or the United States.

4. Several hundred Greek and Maronite Cypriots stayed in the regions of Morphou and Karpassia. Their freedom of movement was considerably reduced and visits from relatives from the south were forbidden for over 15 years. Mistreatment and murder frequently occurred.

5. The cultural heritage of the former Greek Cypriot majority population was systematically destroyed, as was that of the three minorities of north Cyprus. Orthodox churches were destroyed, robbed or converted into barns. Valuable icons were stolen and sold in Europe or the United States. The only Armenian cloister, Sourp Magar (St. Makarios), was plundered and completely destroyed. The cloister, which is located in the mountains of Kyrenia, is reported to have been converted into a hotel by the Turkish Government.

6. Despite an agreement between the Cypriot Government and the regime of Turkish-occupied Cyprus to clarify the fate of the 1,619 Greek Cypriots who disappeared during the war in Cyprus no serious efforts are being made, while the official Cypriot side has begun to release information about several hundred Turkish Cypriots victims of the internal troubles in Cyprus in the 1960s.

7. Today, north and south Cyprus are hermetically sealed off from one another. The Turkish army and the Denktash regime have separated the island with walls and barbed wire. The Turkish side has prevented Turkish Cypriots from visiting the south and Greek Cypriots from the north, with few exceptions.

8. The Society for Threatened Peoples calls upon the Commission on Human Rights to:

(a) Reinstate freedom of movement for members of all five Cypriot nationalities on the whole island;

(b) Prevent the continuation of the destruction of the cultural heritage in north Cyprus and to make possible the reconstruction or renovation of destroyed Greek, Maronite and Armenian churches and cloisters;

(c) Protect the property of those who fled and were deported from north Cyprus;

(d) Carry out free elections on the whole island and limit the right to vote to legal Cypriot citizens;

(e) Secure the possibility of return of all refugees and deportees and make possible compensation for those who do not wish to return;

(f) Support negotiations for a federal solution of the Cyprus problem;

(g) Establish protection for minorities from the three small national groups on the whole island and grant the five Maronite areas near Morphou autonomous status;

(h) Put the Armenian cloister area of Sourp Magar (St. Makarios) under the administration of UNESCO and under the administration of a democratically elected Cypriot Government once it has been established.